Comparing fayol and mintzberg's theories on management flashcard

Management is a vague term which throughout the years many scientists have attempted to define. Is it the objectives of management or the roles one undertakes as a manager that best describes the work of managers? This is a question posed since 1971, when Henry Mintzberg established his contemporary theory on Management roles, which evidently differed to Henri Fayol's 1949 classical theory on Management Functions. Fayol identifies five elements of management- planning, organising, co-ordinating, commanding and controlling all of which he believed were necessary to facilitate the management process.

In comparison Mintzberg considers management activities to fall within three broad groups- interpersonal, informational and decisional which encompass his ten management roles of figurehead, leader, liaison, spokesperson, disseminator, monitor, resource allocator, entrepreneur, disturbance handler and negotiator. Although due to their differences, these theories can be treated as competing views, both can also be perceived as reinforcing the other as many parallels and similarities intrinsically exist. Consequentially the term ' managerial style' combines the two theories. Mintzberg obtained his theory as a result of research based on observation. Hence, his roles directly depict what managers do.

He argues that Fayol's functions ' do not describe the actual work of managers at all; they describe certain vague objectives of managerial work' (Mintzberg 1971). As he observed the managers in his research, he found that all activities captured at lease one of his ten roles in practice whereas they could not be simplified to be known singularly as one of Fayol's functions. For example, a manager sending a memo out to subordinates

informing them of the outcome of the mornings meeting is directly taking on the informational role of disseminator- providing internal personnel with information obtained either external or internal of the organisation. While there is a role that directly describes this task, there is not a particular function. It can be considered that the task's purpose is to co-ordinate, as the memo may ensure different departments are informed of an issue which in turn may enhance the chances of harmony existing within the organisation.

Or the objective of the memo could be to command the subordinates to work harder as output may have been low last month and as a result there will be a competition running for the most productive ' worker of the month'. As in the case just illustrated the function of the task is more subjective as opposed to the role undertaken to carry out the task. Therefore Mintzberg's statement is supported as the functions can indeed be vague. However, although there was not a strong link between management functions and roles in the previous example, there are many which exist. Lamond's (2004) article agrees that the theories appear to be in conflict as '.

.. Fayol's focus on what managers should do if they lived in an idealised state... Mintzberg's concerns with what manager's actually do, given on the demands they experience day-to-day'.

But, Lamond argues, ' they represent two sides of the same coin' (Lamond 2004) implying that fundamentally both theories are true. A manager engaged in the interpersonal role of leadership may oversee the training of new employees. This task can clearly be understood in terms of several of

Fayol's functions. As the manager unifies and encourages employees, he/she is also ensuring everyone is clear on their job responsibilities and warrants all is going according to plan. This is an example in which the manager is in charge of the situation hence the controlling and commanding functions are evident.

Also, the fact that the training is actually following a plan proves that the planning function is also involved. Hence ' the acceptance of Mintzberg's model does not necessarily negate the validity of another' (Fells 2000). Fells proves that Fayol's theory is still viable in modern times by comparing his model against Mintzberg's and Kotter's. By breaking down the models into their separate constituents, they can be linked in ways that show which elements interrelate. For instance, in regards to Fayol and Mintzberg's models, Fells demonstrates that the decisional role of resource allocator relates to organising, co-ordinating and planning functions. This can be applied when a manager decides where resources should be allocated.

He/she may follow a pre-made plan which attempts to organise and co-ordinate the resources to ensure they are distributed to areas that need them. Significant organisational decisions are required in this task which would have already been made when drawing up the plan. These interrelated concepts can be highly subjective and the relationship between some may be stronger or weaker than others. It is ence possible one may additionally recognise the control and command functions in this example, as the manager would be directing others to follow through with his decisions and generally, controls the entire procedure.

The concept of managerial style, attempts to combine the two function and role theories. By focusing on both behaviours that are observed and theoretically based, it describes a set of behaviours which characterises how one may play a role and associate it with its managerial functions. For example the entrepreneur role involves seeking the organisation and its environment for opportunities and change. It can be combined with the context of the planning function of making provision for the future.

Lamond's (2004) article suggests that ' If the argument holds that managerial behaviour can be characterised as role enactment of the managerial functions, then we would expect to see similarities and differences in the ways in which those roles are enacted. (Lamond 2004, p336) Within a style there are therefore many ways to carry out that style. Hence, a manager enacting the entrepreneur role may prefer to search for long-term opportunities or current opportunities. Additionally one may not be able to perform the style in their preferred way. As a consequence there is an emergence of preferred and enacted management styles.

Preferred being what a manager may prefer to do, and enacted being what a manager is forced to do, depending on situational demands and limits. Hence although fundamentally different, Fayol and Mintzberg's theories both can be considered true as a manager performing one of Mintzberg's roles is ultimately striving to perform the object of the job, that being Fayol's management functions. Separately, neither Fayol nor Mintzberg purely capture management. However their combined theories demonstrated by the concept of managerial style create a far better picture, affirming that

both the roles and the functions of management are required to describe and define the job.